

Seeking first the kingdom of God (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 00] In all of our dependence upon the Lord for his gracious help, I would direct your prayer for attention this evening to the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew and the last two verses, verses 33 and 34.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The Gospel according to Matthew chapter 6, verses 33 and 34. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

[1 : 23] The Lord Jesus Christ, in this middle section of his sermon, sets before the disciples these things which concern inordinate affection of the things of the world.

That they're not to unduly regard. These things, although they are necessary things, but their Father, their Heavenly Father, knoweth that they have need of these things, and is well able and willing to supply all their needs.

So the Lord Jesus Christ, and let us remember, most importantly, that these are the words of the Lord Jesus.

No man ever spake like this man. He spake as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

And so what he says we should take due regard of. We should consider these things very carefully.

[2 : 57] As we mentioned this morning, he is the unchangeable one. He has not altered his thoughts. Neither has he turned from his ways.

What he has spoken stands fast to all eternity. He can never change his mind. He can never alter his course.

And so what is spoken here is as relevant today as it was then, and will remain relevant to the end of time.

Then the Lord Jesus sets these things before the disciples to show the distinction, which is between the true child of God and the person of this world.

That the person of this world is ever seeking after greater riches and greater positions, greater fame.

[4 : 14] But the child of God is not to be so. He is to be patient, to wait upon his God, and to seek no other will but his.

Remembering that he can take all his concerns to God in prayer. That he can make requests at the throne of heaven.

And God does not stint in his supply to his people. But often proves himself better to them than all their fears.

Then he comes to these what might seem, as it were, the positive side of the same message.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

[5 : 19] In this 33rd verse, we have firstly an exhortation from the Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples.

And remember that he is here speaking especially to his disciples. It is then an exhortation that they are to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Then that is followed by a gracious promise. And all these things of which he has been speaking, all these things shall be added unto you.

The Lord is able to give in abundance unto his people, if it be his sovereign will.

Then, first to try and understand these words. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

[6 : 33] Well, what are we to understand by the kingdom of God? Well, when we think of kingdoms in this world, we think of geographical areas.

A king is the head of a particular country, and the area of that country is under his direct authority.

And he goes not beyond the bounds of his limitations. But the kingdom of God is not to be thought of in these terms.

God's kingdom is not a geographical area. For we read that the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.

He is the sovereign Lord over heaven and over earth. He says the gold is mine and the silver is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, they are mine also.

[7 : 43] And so he claims ownership of everything that is upon the face of this earth. Ultimately, they all belong to him.

Whatever we may possess is only ours to keep for a season. There comes a time when we must give them up.

And we must pass them on. And they will be ours no more. But God is the sovereign owner of all things for all time.

God is his.

But these words here have a more direct and particular meaning. The kingdom of God is that kingdom which he has set up upon the face of this earth.

[8 : 50] I suppose if we consider it in this sense, there are two kingdoms upon this earth.

The kingdom of God which is in the hearts of his own chosen people. And the kingdom of Satan.

Satan is variously referred to as the prince of the air. The god of this world.

The ruler of men's hearts. And of course, all men, all people by nature belong unto him in the first instance.

He reigns in their hearts. He directs them in their ways. He governs them and leads them in their sinful and lustful desires to the fulfilling of all things which will bring them at last unto perdition.

[10 : 13] But then there is a greater than Satan. And the Lord Jesus Christ has conquered. He has triumphed.

devil.

He has put him to flight. That is true in two senses. Christ came into this world in the likeness of sinful flesh sin only accepted.

And we read concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that he was driven into the wilderness with that specific purpose to be tempted of the devil.

And the devil thought that he could gain advantage over the Lord Jesus Christ. He saw him in the weakness of his humanity and considered that the link with his father in heaven was not as strong as it was when he was in glory.

[11 : 40] But how foolish is the devil in thinking that he can overpower God. and although he tempted him sore in those various aspects yet at last the Lord Jesus put the devil to flight and he left him for a season.

But throughout the life of the Lord Jesus Christ the devil did not leave him alone. We find him in the lives of certain people and the influence that satanic influence which directed their lives and made them mad with the madness of this world.

When the Lord Jesus Christ put the devil out from these people they were found clothed and in their right mind. And so we see that in this that the Lord Jesus Christ was more than a match for the devil.

But then the devil plotted through one of his own disciples to gain that dominion and he conceived of a plan whereby the Lord Jesus Christ should be put to death.

But oh the devil you know he is limited in his power and in his understanding for we read that it was by the predeterminate counsel of God that the Lord Jesus Christ should die.

[13 : 24] And although the devil tried his utmost and thought that he had come to the place of triumph yet in the final analysis Christ triumphed over him and by his death he conquered death and put the devil to flight forever.

So Christ has gained ascendancy over the God of this world but there is another sense in which we must consider this that is when Christ enters into the hearts of his covenant people when they become his and it is necessary in that case that the devil there must also be put to flight that room in the heart might be made for the Lord Jesus.

There is a hymn and it's sometimes considered wrongly but I know Mr. Wood often quotes it come into my heart Lord Jesus there is room in my heart for thee and why is there room because the Holy Ghost has made room he's made room for the Lord Jesus to enter in and there to take his sovereign place to rule in the hearts of his dear people and this is what we can say is when the kingdom of God comes to us now what do we know of these things what do we know of them by experience there are many today who consider these things merely to be fable mystical things yes they are a mystery to the men and women of this world but to

God's people they are a living reality real religions more than notion something must be known and found there is an experimental side with God's people of which they can tell of which they know and are assured of that it is the Lord it is that powerful work of the spirit wrought within it is not man coming and taking possession of Christ but it is Christ coming and taking possession of the hearts of his people thy kingdom come oh God thy rule on earth begin break with thine iron rod the tyranny of sin it is when that tyranny of sin is broken in the hearts of God's covenant people that the

Lord Jesus Christ enters in and there claims dominion and there he rules and rules alone there he rules as their sovereign and as their Lord the kingdom of God then is found in the hearts of true believers and unless the kingdom of God is found there then we are none of his the scriptures are very clear in these things without the spirit of Christ we are none of his it's solemn to think that so many today are deceived into thinking because they have a certain knowledge of the scriptures and that they can relate to certain doctrines that they must be saved our salvation is not to be found in these things salvation is to be found in

[18 : 03] Jesus Christ alone but seek you first the kingdom of God and his righteousness really these words and his righteousness are a confirmation of the kingdom of God this is what the kingdom of God is it's a displacement of our own righteousness it is a reception of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and again that righteousness may be seen in two specific ways the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is the out working of the will of God in his life in the volume of the book it is written of me I come to do thy will oh my

God thy law is within my heart and we read in the gospels the account of the Lord Jesus Christ upon this earth ever and always doing the will of the father doing it with perfection doing it completely and the Lord Jesus Christ could not be satisfied until the will of the father was completed but then when that was done he could cry even from the cross it is finished the work on earth was done that great work that the father sent him to do he had fulfilled all the demands of the law holy and perfectly he has satisfied the wrath of his father in fullness and so he died the death of a sinner he died for sins not his own he died for the sins of his people he became their substitute he died on their behalf he paid that ultimate price his own heart's blood and as faith was accounted unto

Abraham for righteousness so the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in the perfection of his works and of his ways in the perfection of his divine self he satisfied then all that God demanded and in recognition of this the father received the loving son into his bosom on that day of ascension he came to be upon the throne of God forever and forever tis Jesus in the sinner's place but secondly righteousness is something that is and must be imparted unto his people now we cannot even if we try to we cannot fulfill the laws demands if we are a debtor in one point the scriptures teach us then we are guilty of every point and who of us can claim sinless perfection or if we were to it would be an absolute lie all have sinned and come short of the glory of God there is none righteous no not one and so we are in and of ourselves full of unrighteousness but the

Lord Jesus Christ shed his blood for the remission of his people and it was that perfect robe of righteousness which the Lord Jesus ruled out on the behalf of his people and as the poet says and spread it all around what a wonderful point of consideration a meditation this is that perfect robe of righteousness put around the guilty sinner to side his nakedness and his shame and there in that wedding garment he is made acceptable unto the father the father sees in the guilty sinner his only beloved son and there he grants complete remission of all their sins accepted says the apostle in the beloved this is where our acceptance is gained it is in the beloved son it is as he imparts his righteousness unto all those that believe we believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ do we believe with our whole hearts can we say my Jesus is mine and I am his and my name is written in heaven wonderful wonderful thing if we can say these things and we can say them with that divine certainty for we know that that sovereign work of God has begun in our hearts and he who have begun a good work in you shall perform it to the day of Jesus Christ and his righteousness well is it not in the attitude of the believer ever to accord unto the Lord Jesus Christ his rightful place not our righteousness but his and we shall ever be debtors to mercy alone of covenant mercy we will sing with that robe of righteousness on there to display before the throne of

[25 : 17] God in heaven and as I often quote those words from revelation what are these that are arrayed in white robes and whence came they these are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb therefore this is why they are before the throne of God and it's the only reason why that they are before the throne of God not clothed in their own righteousness which God abhors but in the righteousness of his only beloved son of which he laughs and so it is acceptance in him by him through him on him in him forever and forever and all the praise and all the glory shall ever and eternally redound unto him not unto us oh

Lord not unto us but unto thy name be glory given ye first the kingdom of God what takes precedence in our lives now let's come closer what takes precedence in our thoughts and here we need to be perfectly honest before God and before man what takes the precedence in our lives can we say that

Christ is first and Christ is last and Christ is all and in all are we putting first things first or do our businesses and our occupations take the first place do our wives or husbands or children take the first place do the building up of our possessions and of our finances take the first place now you must answer for yourselves but what is first in your life you remember when the Lord Jesus went to the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus that family that really loved the Lord Jesus Christ and it was very evident there was a great desire for him in their hearts in each of them but on this occasion

Martha was busily attending unto the supper she was to present to the Lord Jesus and his disciples and we can well imagine that in her kitchen as it were there she was active in trying to present that which was her best unto such a notable guest but where was her sister while her sister was sitting at the feet of Jesus harkening to the gracious words that poured forth from his lips and the Lord Jesus Christ in that rebuke of Martha and remember it was a very mild rebuke the Lord Jesus we know loved Martha but he said Martha Martha thou art troubled about many things but

Mary have chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her you see Mary was putting first things first Martha had been caught up with those necessary things but were they so important what was the most important surely with such a guest in the home who had come on such a visit to sit and listen to what he had to say surely showed the most respect surely it showed the most love surely it showed the most desire now how is it with us what is first with us is the Lord Jesus Christ first in our lives or have other things usurp dominion over him you know

[30 : 48] I speak here to those that are disciples of the Lord Jesus those that are followers of Christ we all of us can be taken up with the things of this world and sometimes these things take such a precedence in our lives that we lose sight of the main objective and for a true Christian surely Christ is that first objective object of my chief desire Jesus crucified for me then may these words may this exhortation tonight stir all of us are to put Christ first in our lives when is it that Christ becomes everything it's when we become nothing you see there are many proud

Christians so called and they think that in their pride that they're doing the will of God well one doesn't want to be a judge of others but I'm sure that the scripture teaches us this when we're nothing in ourselves we're everything in him when Christ is the most precious then we become the least Christ must have that dominion he must have that first place now seek ye first the kingdom of heaven the kingdom of God first in time seek ye early with all your heart if with all your heart ye truly seek me ye shall ever surely find me thus saith the

Lord a paraphrase of the prophet but it is that seeking you young people are you seeking the Lord Jesus in your youth is Christ first is he most precious is he that one thing needful is he your chief desire if not beware lest the affections of this world swallow you up and you be lost to all eternity are we giving him the first place in our occupations and businesses you see it's easy to be carried away with trying to make a living and of course it's only right the scripture is very clear on this six days shalt thou labour six days shalt thou labour and it's right that we should provide for our families and for our loved ones this is

God's order but we're not to do it at the expense of forsaking or forgetting that most important thing the Lord Jesus Christ when the Lord Jesus Christ is in all our hearts then these things take second place or take an inferior place Christ will be the first he will be the chief if Christ isn't everything he will be nothing we can't have an in between measure we can't have a half hearted religion there's no such thing either Christ is everything or I say he is nothing what is he to you what is he to me now let us be clear I believe that every one of us here comes short in this that we need to be reminded we need to be stirred up in the spirit of our minds we need to be exhorted again and again to put

Christ first or the carnal nature of our hearts our unbelief our hardness our coldness or how so many things come into our minds things and we live in a day of great activity and how quickly we can be taken up with so many things that we forget the most important that we forget the Lord Jesus but seek ye first of the kingdom of God and his righteousness isn't there a benefit in seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness yes the Lord Jesus Christ himself tells us so because he goes on to say this and all these things shall be added unto you and all these things shall be added unto you if we give unto the

[36 : 51] Lord we are giving as it were into account which gains tremendous interest seek ye first the kingdom of God that is the most important to know that we are established as citizens of that kingdom to know that when we die we shall go into that kingdom of God glorified and there we shall be forever with the Lord you see there is such a redundancy with the Lord Jesus Christ as we get as it were that extra measure that larger portion a sufficiency and more than a sufficiency for this life these things shall be added unto you added that is given above and beyond these other things and what are these other things these are the most important things a knowledge of the love of Christ a union and communion with him a fellowship with the saints in glory walking and talking day by day with the

Lord Jesus blessed communion oh what a a blessed portion it is for God's people to walk with the Lord Jesus Christ continually there to be so favoured in our hearts I mentioned this morning about the queen of Sheba she came and saw not only the wealth but also the wisdom of Solomon and she was so overcome in her spirits that she said the half had not been told her of the glory of his kingdom oh is it not so here that we cannot tell the heart of the glory that awaits every believer in seeing Christ upon his throne triumphant in that glory over the church as the head of the church that all these things shall be added unto you you know the world is looking for happiness yes in its way

I believe this to be true it's looking for happiness sadly it's looking in the wrong places and it's not looking for the wrong type of happiness it's looking for carnal pleasures it's looking for a happiness which it will never attain to and if it gain some happiness it is so transitory that it will only last for a moment and so in that sense also it is not true happiness but the child of God learns to appreciate what true happiness is it's happiness to know the Lord it's happiness to know our security in the Lord it's happiness to know that we can never be parted from the Lord his forever and forever without any hindrance without any separation to be forever with the

Lord but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you the Lord will give grace and glory and there you see we have those two aspects of the kingdom of God the kingdom of his grace and that is really what the child of God is now engaged in the kingdom of God's grace begun in their hearts the gracious disposition of God in love to their souls and this is the kingdom of grace which will last as long as we live as long as we are permitted to be upon the face of this earth but that kingdom of grace will give way it will end and it will end in this that the moment after death we will be translated into the kingdom of glory now at the first it will be our spirits that are glorified and all these things shall be added unto you the blessed spirits that are around the throne of

God and praise him day and night without ceasing but they await and Christ awaits waits that time until his enemies be made his footstool he waits for that time when every last elect vessel of mercy is safely gathered in and then will be hastened the day of resurrection when the bodies of God's people will rise from their sleep in the dust and will be translated in a moment in the twinkling of an eye and they shall then possess the same bodies but bodies glorified glorified like unto Christ glorious body and it is in that state that they will eternally exist body and spirit brought together glorified beyond our greatest imagination and there to enjoy heaven forever when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes when sin will be something unknown and when we shall enjoy the plenitude of heaven forever and forever then surely surely if we are brought to our senses we can see the merit in the words of the Lord

[44 : 02] Jesus Christ here seek ye first the kingdom of God is it not something worth seeking after is it not something worth seeking with all our hearts and with all our minds and with all our understanding is it not something that we can seek in the first place and in the prime place the best place seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness are to be delivered from this body of death to be clothed with the righteousness of our Lord Jesus and there to possess his grace and his glory forever and forever the Lord will give grace and glory no good thing remember that no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of these things and here is the promise they shall be added unto you you'll never be the losers by following first the Lord

Jesus Christ and by putting everything else in second place oh may then Christ be our all and in all the one thing needful dearest Lord is to be one with thee the Lord at his blessing amen